

certified landowners. Almost without fail, Forester Blake Kelley and I are joined not only by the landowner, but by their entire family for the awarding of their certificate. It does our hearts good to see multiple-use property management linking generations together and building a land ethic.

Aldo Leopold once said the danger in not living on a farm was thinking that food comes from the grocery and heat from the furnace. I feel this accurately reflects the attitude of many people today. This is especially true with children. A recent Kaiser Family Foundation study found the average American child spends 44 hours per week staring at some kind of electronic screen. An author recently diagnosed the youth of today as suffering from "nature deficit disorder." I believe many adults suffer from this as well. When people do not understand the importance of our natural resources, they also do not understand the need to protect them.

This past year's devastating drought is an excellent example. Alabama spent the year in a tussling match with Georgia and Florida over who would get water. It was evident from many news reports that

some areas felt they were somehow "owed" the water they needed to meet their needs. This reflects a mentality that does not understand that natural resources must be protected and conserved. Many people do not understand that water does not originate in the tap. This idea does not set well with today's "I want it now" ideology. TREASURE Forest landowners who are willing to share their property with friends and family are helping to bridge the gap and develop a land ethic in others. Forest landowners understand, we are all part of one ecosystem and we must each do our part to protect it.

Knowing the relationship nature of the TREASURE Forests in Coosa County, I can tell you that having over 100 certified properties reaches a lot of people, people who have an appreciation for the land and want to see it properly managed. I can't help but believe that was what Mr. Moody and others had in mind when they put the TREASURE Forest program in place. TREASURE Forest is a way of life. It's about making your property the best it can be.

So what is the secret to TREASURE Forest certification? It starts with some-

one recognizing a candidate and explaining the program to them. Thomas Edison observed, "Opportunity is missed by most people, because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work!" Having properties certified as TREASURE Forests requires work. There is no way around that. However, like most work, it pays dividends that are worth the effort. In Coosa County, TREASURE Forest certifications are the result of a joint effort. Each member of the committee works toward the goal of certifying landowners. We meet landowners where they are currently and provide them with the information and assistance needed to reach their goals. This, combined with the landowner's efforts has proven to be a good recipe for success. Henry Kaiser remarked, "When your work speaks for itself, don't interrupt."

Therefore, I will sum things up by saying that in most cases, when I assist a landowner and see them progress and eventually merit certification, I receive the blessing. So maybe we have a selfish motive for working on TREASURE Forests . . . perhaps we just like being blessed! ☸

Man Gets 21 Years for Stealing Trees

By *Dennis Sherer* of the *Times Daily*, Florence, AL - Reprinted with Permission

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Lauderdale County Circuit Court Judge Mike Jones chastised Charles Calvin Moore before sentencing him Thursday to 21 years in prison for stealing trees. "Mr. Moore, you are a thief," Jones said after reading a list of prior convictions against the 44-year-old Rogersville man.

In September, a Lauderdale jury convicted Moore of one count of first-degree theft and one count of second-degree theft after witnesses testified he hired a Shoals logging company to cut trees on land near Waterloo that he did not own. Jones sentenced Moore to 21 years on each charge, with the sentences to run concurrently. He also ordered Moore to

pay \$20,666 in restitution, the amount Mike Lanier, a law enforcement specialist for the Alabama Forestry Commission, had testified during the trial that the illegally cut trees from the 12-acre tract were worth. Moore was arrested in 2006 and charged with two counts of first-degree theft. At Thursday's hearing, Moore cried as he asked Jones to spare him from prison so he could earn money for paying the restitution. "I'd like to get work release so I could pay those people back," he said. Mauriel Summerhill, an owner of the property where the trees were cut, told Jones she would like to be paid for the stolen trees, but she also wanted Moore

sent to prison as part of his punishment. "He should serve some time to give him an opportunity to think about what he has done to us," Summerhill said.

Will Powell, chief assistant district attorney, asked Jones to impose a lengthy prison sentence. Defense attorney Billy Jackson, of Florence, argued that if Moore were sent to prison, he would be unable to repay his victims for the trees. After the hearing, Summerhill said she was satisfied with the sentence, but would have preferred the sentences be served one after the other. "I think he should have got 42 years," she said.

As a habitual offender, Moore could have been sentenced to life in prison. ☸